

Hints & Tips with needle felting

- Needle felting involves the blending together of fibres using a barbed triangular needle.
- Needle felting is a dry process. Wet felting is a very different process.
- It allows for greater precision allowing you more control.
- The multi needle tool is useful for large areas & speeds up the felting process.
- The single needle tool is ideal for finer decorative work & 3d sculptures.
- The needles are barbed & triangular in shape. This allows the fibres to catch & become entangled. Made from stainless steel they are very sharp & easily break.
- Use the needle in an upright position, it will help avoid breakages.
- It is advisable to needle felt on a brush mat. (A foam block will also work but take care the foam does not stick to the reverse of your work).
- Commercial felt is ideal for backgrounds but buy a felt with wool content in it as acrylic tends to pucker.
- Whether you use a single needle, multi needle or needle felting machine the principle is the same.
- Needles are repeatedly punched into the fibres until a firm bond is achieved.
- Fibres are laid in thin layers, each layer laid crosswise on top of the previous layer.
- Usually 3 to 4 layers of fibre are sufficient.
- Each layer of fibre needs to be teased out to form a thin layer.
- Interesting effects can be achieved by blending different colours.
- Do not over felt, this destroys the fibres & can end up with a hole.
- Occasionally lift the fabric off the mat to avoid it becoming attached.
- The more you felt the more the fabric compacts and shrinks.
- Water soluble fabric can be placed between the base mat & fibres. It provides a stable surface to work on. Also you can draw a design on it that acts as a template. This can be washed away afterwards. You can create a firmer starched effect by not washing out all of the water soluble fabric.
- You can needle felt onto most fabrics. Certain fabrics will pucker but this can add to the look of your project.
- Mistakes cannot be undone but can be felted over.
- Merino take longer to felt as it is a finer fiber.